

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets.]

[Personal information has been **redacted**.]

[The excerpt below is from the section of the article that pertains to the Baha'i Faith]

[Adapted from website:] Marde Rooz

[Date:] 23 October 2013

Shahin is a Baha'i

Letter From a Muslim Friend From Tehran

Shahin and his wife Mina have two daughters. They moved from Kerman to Tehran in 1386 [2007/2008]. They sold their elegant mansion there but kept their shop. Shahin thought that by selling his big house in Kerman, he could buy a shop and an apartment in Tehran, but he could not even afford an apartment for himself. For this reason, he was somehow caught by surprise in Tehran. At the same time, my wife asked me, "Why do not you help him? He is not familiar with the affairs of Tehran." I said, "They are Baha'is and eventually their fellow religionists will come to their rescue."

They faced a high-priced housing crisis in late 1386 [2008], and Shahin was only able to buy a basement in the western town. The new house was very difficult for this family, who used to live in a big house. Eventually they sold it at a loss and bought a relatively decent apartment in a crowded complex. He had moved to Tehran hoping for a better education for his children and now they were quite far from the good schools. For this reason, he let out his apartment and rented a flat in the suburb of Shahrara.

Sometime later, I realized that, as his daughters were growing up in the city [Kerman], they were being harassed by some extremist religious people due to their being Baha'i. The harassment had been increasing, and inevitably, for this reason, they had decided to leave the city and immigrate to Tehran. For this reason, Shahin was never able to organize the specialty in which he was skilled. The work he got involved with in Tehran did not provide him with an adequate living. He decided to revive the shop he had in Kerman. He had to leave his family alone in Tehran and go to Kerman to work. He was traveling for a while, but soon his shop in Kerman was set on fire.

Now, he has rented a small shop in Tehran and lives there. His wife, Mina, despite her higher education, is engaged in teaching at a kindergarten, one of the few jobs in which Baha'is can work quietly. These are people who rely heavily on their god. They are very firm in their beliefs and consider themselves saved. Perhaps this faith causes them to be patient in the face of adversity.

Our country is replete with discrimination. I do not know whether or not you are aware of the situation of dollars or gold coins, but they have also blamed the Baha'is for buying a lot of currency, and it is said that the Baha'is have thrown the country into the present chaotic condition. Both the minister of intelligence and Kayhan falsely attribute economic problems and crises to the Baha'is.

Really, who exactly are the Baha'is? Before my eyes, the economic life of a Baha'i family has completely collapsed. I, who did not always fail in these kinds of situations, neglected him and said that finally his fellow religionists would do something! What fellow religionists? What group? After paying close attention to him, I did not come across any other Baha'is except people like Shahin, who are struggling with life and economic hardship and deprivation.

In such circumstances, if we want a peaceful future for beloved Iran, we must pay attention to the pain of our compatriots who are also subjected to more discrimination. The situation of the Baha'is in this country is indescribable. They do not officially exist at all. All the discrimination of the world is on their shoulders. I am ashamed to see their difficult life in Iran.

Before Shahin, I had not come to know any other Baha'i and I was not aware of the quality of their lives. Yesterday, when I saw Shahin, his two beautiful and talented girls immediately appeared in front of my eyes. They will soon graduate from the school and be [barred from] entering the university.